THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • DECEMBER 01, 2020 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

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JOE BIDEN BREAKS HIS FOOT WHILE PLAYING WITH PET DOG

The US President-elect has hairline fractures in his mid-foot and may need a walking boot for a few weeks, his doctor said

HAIRLINE FRACTURES SHOW UP IN CT SCAN

The Democratic leader twisted his ankle on Saturday when he slipped while playing with Major, his two-year-old German shepherd. "Initial X-rays did not show any obvious fracture, but CT scan confirmed hairline (small) fractures of President-elect Biden's lateral and intermediate cuneiform bones, which are in the midfoot," Biden's physician Dr Kevin O'Connor said

'GET WELL SOON', TRUMP TWEETS

- Biden's last health record was released by Dr O'Connor in Dec '19
- The physician said Biden is "healthy, vigorous". Biden does not use tobacco or drink alcohol and exercises five days a week
- President Donald Trump, a Republican, who has not yet conceded the November 3 presidential election, tweeted, "Get well soon!"

78-yr-old

BIDEN WILL BE THE OLDEST PREZ IN U.S. HISTORY WHEN HE TAKES OATH ON JAN 20

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Gram Panchayat polls to be held on Dec 22, 27

Districts divided into two for 2-phase polls; Counting on Dec 30

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka State Election Commission on Monday announced elections for 5,762 gram panchayats, which will be held in two phases on December 22 and 27 across the state. Counting for both phases will be on December 30.

The polling will be held from 7 am to 5 pm, while the State Election Commission (SEC) has made a provision for Covid-positive patients to vote in the last hour. The Model Code of Conduct will come into force from Monday.

The elections were due in May/June this year, but postponed because of the pandemic. After a PIL was filed, the Karnataka High Court had directed the SEC to announce the dates by December 4.

State Election Commissioner B Basavaraju told the media that since gram panchayat elections are being held under the shadow of a pandemic for the first time, all precautionary measures will be taken.

Unlike earlier elections, this time the Commission has divided each district into two parts. "The idea is to avoid travelling of poll staff outside their district limits. Anyway, it is not advisable to travel with the pandemic still prevailing," he added. The first part will face elections in the first phase, while the second in the latter phase. The SEC will use electronic voting machines (EVMs) at all panchayats in Bidar district, while the remaining districts will have regular paper ballots.

As many as 2.70 lakh poll staff are needed for both phases, including 5,847 returning officers and 6,085 assistant returning officers. "For the first time, we are taking the help of Anganwadi, Asha and healthcare workers," he said.

The state has over 6,000 gram panchayats, of which the term of 162 will end after December. Some panchayats have cases pending before courts, while some others have been upgraded to town municipalities. The total number of voters is 2.96 crore, of which 1.49 crore are male, 1.47 crore female and 1,048 others. The notification for the elections will be issued by respective deputy commissioners on December 7 and December 11 for the first and second phases, respectively.

Even before the dates were announced, all political parties have started preparations on the ground. **P5**

ELECTIONS AT THE GRASSROOTS

DEC 22: FIRST PHASE

2,930 GPs from 178 taluks of all 30 districts

- **DEC 7:** Notification by DCs
- **DEC 11:** Last day to file nomination
- **DEC 12:** Scrutiny of nominations
- **DEC 14:** To withdraw nomination

DEC 27: SECOND PHASE

2,832 GPs from 178 taluks of all 30 districts

- **DEC 11:** Notification by DCs
- **DEC 16:** Last day to file nomination
- **DEC 17:** Scrutiny of nominations
- **DEC 19:** To withdraw nomination

Poll Arena Factsheet

Bharatiya Kisan Union members protest after the police imposed Section 144 at the Ghazipur border, during their Delhi Chalo march, in New Delhi on Monday | PTI

AGRICULTURE MINISTER INVITES FARMERS FOR TALKS TODAY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Chandigarh

WITH the farmers' protest entering its fourth day on Monday, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar sent out a late-night invite to the unions to come for talks at 3 pm at Vigyan Bhavan on Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, Union Home Minister Amit Shah met Tomar for the second time in two days to find a way out of the stand-off at Delhi's borders. Sources said the government was ready for unconditional talks on all matters but was firmly against repealing the three new farm sector reform laws that are at the centre of the agitation.

The exploratory exercise to set up a talks table began after Shah reportedly spoke to Buta Singh, president of the Bharatiya Kisan Union. Singh claimed he received a phone call from Shah to resolve the issue, though the minister's office denied the conversation. "I spoke to Shah and he invited the farmers organisations for talks without pre-conditions. A formal invite is yet to arrive. If we get it, then we will decide accordingly," Singh said.

Confirmation of the conversation came from former Punjab minister and senior BJP leader Surjit Kumar Jayani who said he was the conduit. "I made Buta Singh speak to Amit Shah," he said.

A host of issues were discussed at the meeting Shah had with Tomar, sources said, including the politicisation of the protests, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi criticised in Varanasi. The sparring match between Haryana Chief Minister M L Khattar and his Punjab counterpart Amarinder Singh over the protests also came up for discussion.

The meeting happened at a time when the protesting farmers have threatened to block five entry points — Sonipat, Rohtak, Jaipur, Ghaziabad-Hapur and Mathura — into the Capital.

Meanwhile, Sombir Sangwan, an independent MLA from the Dadri segment in Charkhi Dadri, announced support to the agitation. He heads the Sangwan Khap that has influence in 40 villages in Bhiwani and Dadri districts.

For his part, Capt Amarinder Singh asked the Centre to listen to the farmers. "If farmers are joining the agitation from so many states, then they must be really upset," he said.

As for the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, it said: "Our demand for the withdrawal of the new laws is not negotiable." **P4, 9**

'Modi must listen to our *Mann ki Baat*'

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, an umbrella body of 250 farmer unions, criticised the stout defence of the new farm laws, saying it was the turn of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to listen to their *Mann Ki Baat*

NEW LAWS NOT TO CHEAT AGRI COMMUNITY: MODI

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

Amid a battle of perception on the three new farm reform bills, PM Narendra Modi on Monday tore into the Opposition for allegedly misguiding the farmers by spreading canards in the name of baseless futuristic lurking threats. He, however, reached out to the agitating farmers, saying they cannot be blamed for the protests as they were misled by vested interests. Modi was addressing a gathering in Varanasi during a visit to take part in the Dev Deepavali celebrations.

"New laws have been brought to realise the promises we made to the farmers of our country. Policies are being framed not to deceive the farmers but with honesty and transparency," he said. Criticising previous governments for allegedly deceiving farmers through subsidies, the PM said: "I feel the farmers should not be blamed for the agitation. It is natural for them to be suspicious as they have suffered deception for decades in the past."

MODERNA SHOT

100% efficacy in severe cases raises the bar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

US-BASED biotech major Moderna on Monday said its Covid vaccine candidate COVE showed 100% efficacy in severe cases, while it was 94.1% effective overall, as final results of of its phase 3 study in the US came in.

Of the 30,000 who participated in its phase 3 study in the US, 196 developed Covid-19. However, 185 of them had received a placebo (dummy drug), while just 11 got the real vaccine. In all, 30 participants got severely ill, including one who died. But all 30 got dummy shots, indicating the vaccine was 100% effective against the novel coronavirus.

"We have already, just in the trial, saved lives. Just imagine the impact when multiplied to the people who can get this vaccine," said Dr Tal Zaks, the company's chief medical officer.

Moderna is in the process of applying for emergency use authorisation for its vaccine. Meanwhile, the cost of the Oxford vaccine in the Indian open market is expected to be $4-6.

Karnataka gears up for Covid vaccine delivery

The Union Cabinet Secretary held a video conference with chief secretaries of various states and UTs on Saturday to discuss Covid-related issues, including vaccination. In a statement following the meeting, the Karnataka Health Department said it has initiated necessary preparations for vaccine delivery, distribution and administration as per the Centre's advice. **P3**

EXPRESS READ

HAL delivers C32 LH2 tank to ISRO

Bengaluru: Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd on Monday said it has delivered the biggest cryogenic propellant tank (C32 LH2) ever fabricated by the company to ISRO, much ahead of the contractual schedule. **P7**

Utpal Kumar Singh is LS Secretary General

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday appointed IAS officer Utpal Kumar Singh as Secretary General of the Lok Sabha, an order said. He assumes charge on December 1, succeeding Snehlata Shrivastava.

Vishwanath disqualified, can't be minister: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IT's bad news for BJP MLC **A H Vishwanath** who wanted to become a minister. The Karnataka High Court on Monday upheld his disqualification for the present term of the assembly. Vishwanath is a nominated member of the Legislative Council.

But with the other two MLCs --R Shankar and N Nagaraj (MTB) -- the court said disqualification will not operate in their case as they have got elected to the upper house. "We hold that Vishwanath ex facie (on the face of it) attracts disqualification under Articles 164 (1) (b) and 361 (B) . Thus, his disqualification will continue till the expiry of the term of the Assembly. However, after the expiry of the term, if he gets elected (not nominated), the disqualification cannot apply. As of today, the disqualification under both the provisions are applicable," it said.

"If the Governor is asked by the CM to appoint as minister a person who is disqualified, the Governor having due regards to the Constitution and laws is empowered to decline to appoint him and administer oath," said a division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice S Vishwajith Shetty.

CONTINUED ON: P4

In a first, state unveils e-learning tool for government college students

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister B S Yediyurappa on Monday unveiled the first-of-its-kind digital education initiative for government college students -- Learning Management System (LMS) Karnataka. It will be rolled out for five lakh students in 430 government first-grade colleges, 87 government polytechnics and 14 government engineering colleges from academic year 2020-21.

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Higher Education Dr C N Ashwath Narayan called it a revolutionary step in the teaching and learning process in higher education in the country. The open-source platform, developed at ₹4 crore, will give a leg-up in education to all government college students, providing them access to

self-learning and live learning, while gauging the performance of each student, he added.

The Department of Higher Education touted this as a means to bridge the digital divide between the urban and rural students, and private and government institutions.

The platform will have videos of one-hour lectures that take place in classes, PPTs, study material and practice test of 10 multiple-choice questions. The content, both in Kannada and English, has been developed university-wise and subject-wise by the faculty of the Department of Collegiate and Technical Education over the past one month, said Pradeep P, Commissioner for Collegiate Education. The PPT will be a step-up from chalk and board method, he added.

He told *TNIE* that only the first phase of the platform, developed by a third party in 15 days, has been rolled out at present. In this phase, the login and content access will be given to students and teachers.

Deeming the platform as a medium to close the learning loop with continuous evaluation, he said it has daily and weekly tests and the continuous evaluation works as an effective tool to gauge the capacity and weakness of students and teachers. **P2**

RAJINI's POLITICAL PLUNGE STILL UNCERTAIN

Actor meets with district secretaries of Rajini Makkal Mandram, but no concrete response from him yet | **P7**

Took pills by mistake, says Santhosh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister B S Yediyurappa's Political Secretary **N R Santhosh** on Monday denied having attempted suicide, saying he had taken sleeping pills "by mistake", and hit out at KPCC chief D K Shivakumar for demanding a probe into the alleged suicide attempt, indicating that there could be a political reason for the incident.

Santhosh (31), after being discharged from MS Ramaiah Memorial Hospital around 1.30 pm, told reporters that he had suffered indigestion after a feast at a cousin's wedding on Friday. **P4**

CYCLONE LOOMS

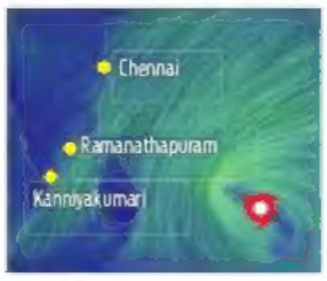
It will be a chilly, gloomy December, warns Met Dept

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

NIVAR was only the harbinger of the season. Storm clouds are once again gathering on the horizon, threatening to make it a cloudy week and wet weekend for Bengaluru and most parts of south-interior Karnataka.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast the formation of another cyclone in Bay of Bengal, besides a cyclonic circulation in the Arabian Sea. Both are likely to result in wet, dreary weather.

The depression forming over southeast Bay of Bengal is likely to become a cyclonic storm and move north-westwards towards the Tamil Nadu coast and Sri Lanka. IMD Bengaluru director in-charge C S Patil told *TNIE* that the cyclone will bring rain to south-interior Karnataka on December 3 and 4. The prevailing easterly winds will result in cloud cover, bringing down the maximum temperature, while the minimum temperature will be near normal, he added.



Weather officials also warned of the formation of a cyclonic circulation over southeast Arabian Sea, off the Kerala coast, extending 0.9 km above mean sea level.

Patil said that winter is already setting in the northern hemisphere and easterly winds are still prevailing over the southern hemisphere. **P5**